

# Missoula County Media Release

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## **Missoula 9-1-1 Center Experienced Three-Hour Outage**

At approximately 12:15 a.m. on Aug. 2, 2018 the Missoula 9-1-1 Center was notified that all 9-1-1 lines into the center were inoperable and unable to be transferred to any of the redundant systems in place. 9-1-1 staff was also notified that the outage affected several surrounding counties. 9-1-1 outages are considered a county-wide emergency; therefore Missoula 9-1-1 issued an emergency alert to notify citizens of the outage and to provide an alternate emergency number to reach a 9-1-1 dispatcher and emergency resources. Re-routing capabilities were restored at approximately 3:15 a.m. on Aug. 2, 2018. Shortly thereafter, conventional 9-1-1 lines were also restored.

Issuing an emergency alert is not an action that is taken lightly. Office of Emergency Management (OEM) staff know the disruption it can cause to residents, especially in the middle of the night. It is OEM's responsibility to ensure the public can access 9-1-1 in an emergency.

The alert informed recipients that all 9-1-1 lines were down and to use an alternate emergency number 728-0911; this number received 25 calls during the outage. These calls were both emergent and non-emergent. The Missoula 9-1-1 Center typically receives 10-20 emergency calls for service, during this time of night. The alert was issued to 32,000 phones via voice, text or both. Residents may not have received the alert for one of several reasons: they have not registered for alerts with Smart 9-1-1 (if you have registered and did not receive the alert, check your settings and make sure you have selected to receive alerts from Missoula OEM), circuits may have been busy, or they could have been affected by the outage as well.

OEM has taken great steps to create a redundant network that enables the 9-1-1 center to deal with interruptions. On Aug. 2 these redundant and separate systems were also affected by the outage for unknown reasons. OEM is diligently investigating the cause of the outage so the issues can be resolved quickly.

Missoula 9-1-1 had been working with Blackfoot in anticipation of scheduled maintenance on Aug. 2 that was anticipated to affect only non-emergency lines into the center. Neither Blackfoot or our 9-1-1 phone provider, Century Link, believed 9-1-1 lines would be affected during this maintenance. At this time OEM has requested, but not yet received, information from Blackfoot and Century Link.

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